

## ***Make sure the RSA is your information source!***

Whenever you have a question about your retirement account, RSA-1 Deferred Compensation account, or PEEHIP health insurance plans, contact RSA Member Services at 877-517-0020 or 334-517-7000 with your questions to avoid receiving the wrong information. If you do rely on outside sources and are given erroneous information, you could make a mistake concerning your retirement or health insurance. Do not rely on colleagues or acquaintances for “expert” advice on your retirement and health insurance plans. It is not possible for even your personnel department to know the RSA/PEEHIP plans and regulations like our RSA counselors. Every year there are a few new retirees who did not complete their retirement application properly or selected the wrong retirement option because they did not contact the RSA for advice.

The RSA has also become increasingly aware that private, “for profit” companies are advertising they have “retirement experts” or “retirement specialists” who can advise public school teachers and state and local employees on their retirement plans. These are private companies seeking to sell financial services and, in turn, make a substantial profit from your account. They may know the plan they are marketing, but they do not know the RSA plans. If any of these private plans or their employees tell you they represent the RSA, please phone RSA Member Services at 877-517-0020 or 334-517-7000 immediately and advise us of that fact.

When you are preparing to retire, you need to gather as much information as possible in order to make good decisions about your retirement. These decisions will affect you and your family for years to come.

That is why the RSA offers two educational statewide programs for its members to receive the most reliable information about their retirement and health care benefits. These programs are entitled: ***Retirement Preparation Seminars*** (Ret Preps) and ***Control Your Money Game...You're Not There Yet!*** The RSA does not hold retirement planning seminars in restaurants or hotels; there is never a charge; you will not be served dinner; and we do not have seminars at night. To attend an official RSA educational program, you will have to be registered. The registration form and schedule are posted on the RSA Web site. If you do not see a seminar listed on the RSA Web site – it is not ours! The RSA does not stand by any information given out at seminars other than the ones sponsored by the RSA. If you have a question about the validity of a retirement planning program, contact the RSA Field Services Division: 877-517-0020 or 334-517-7000.

The ***Retirement Preparation Seminars*** or Ret Preps are for ERS and TRS members within five years of retirement eligibility. These full-day seminars are comprehensive in nature and will give members a “heads up” on decision-making. You will be provided information on Social Security from a Social Security representative; retirement transitions; your actual retirement plan explained in detail; DROP; the RSA-1 Deferred Compensation Plan; and PEEHIP information. You will also be given an estimate of your benefits prepared by the RSA benefit counselors. There is ample opportunity to ask questions of the several presenters in attendance.

Due to the overwhelming response to the Ret Preps and due to much feedback from members saying they needed this information twenty years ago, the RSA now offers a second educational program. ***Control Your Money Game....You're Not There Yet!*** is a half-day program for all those members who are not eligible for the Ret Preps. Even if a member has just started their job, they need to attend one of these programs and get focused on the right track to a secure retirement.

In addition to these education programs, members can visit our counselors at RSA Headquarters by making an appointment with RSA Member Services at 877-517-0020 or 334-517-7000. Calling for an appointment will ensure prompt service, plus the counselors will have prepared your account information in advance of your arrival. Avoid making mistakes with your retirement by contacting Member Services today.

Retirement planning is supposed to begin the very first day you start to work. Not many go by this rule. But you can be one who does by contacting Member Services and visiting the RSA Web site at [www.rsa-al.gov](http://www.rsa-al.gov) for more information about your retirement system.

Prepared by the Communications staff of the Retirement Systems of Alabama. To have your questions answered in "Preparing for Retirement", please address them to **Michael Pegues, Communications, Retirement Systems of Alabama, P.O. Box 302150, Montgomery, Alabama 36130-2150**. Please visit our Web site at [www.rsa-al.gov](http://www.rsa-al.gov).